

149. A N
A T T E M P T

TO RESTORE

Scripture Forms of Worship;

O R,

A FRIENDLY DIALOGUE

Between a common UNITARIAN Christian,
converted by some late Writings, and
an ATHANASIAN, occasioned by the
former's Behaviour during some Part
of the Public Service.

*Whatsoever ye do in Word or Deed, do all in the Name
of the Lord Jesus, giving Thanks to God even the
Father by him. COLOSS. iii. 17.*

*Blessing, Honour, Glory, and Power be unto him that
sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for
ever and ever. REVEL. v. 13.*

Sold by S. GAMIDGE, at Prior's Head,
WORCESTER.

Price FOUR-PENCE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Dialogue is designed for the use of common Christians, who, by experience, are found competent judges of the doctrine here contended for, when it is delivered in its native simplicity, as it was first preached by Christ and his Apostles. Plain Scripture facts are adapted to all capacities, and cannot be overthrown by all the learned sophistry in the world. 'Tis to be hoped, that there is amongst us many rational Christians, who will distribute such little tracts, in order to help forward the glorious work of another reformation, which, though the times are favourable in several respects, is very much obstructed by irreligion on one side, and superstition and enthusiasm on the other.



AN



A N

A T T E M P T

TO RESTORE

Scripture Forms of Worship.

Atha-nasian. **N**EIGHBOUR, as I al-
ways thought you a Person of a serious turn of mind, and have frequently observed your exemplary conduct in the public worship, your behaviour this day, at church, gave me great surprize, and indeed uneasiness, because you seemed to treat some parts of our excellent liturgy with disregard. You used to repeat, after the minister, the four first petitions of the litany in a devout and solemn manner, and to join in every part of our liturgy, so justly celebrated by great numbers of pious and learned men. But I took notice

A 2 this

*m
x*

this day, at church, you put on a silent indifference, when the Holy Spirit, and the three Persons in the Trinity were invoked: neither did you seem to give your assent to the doxology, so frequently directed, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: you seemed likewise not to join in the latter end of those Prayers, which conclude with the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, so plainly and solemnly established by our glorious church, and confirmed by the learned pains of many excellent writers. I should be glad to know the true reason of this surprising change; and make no doubt but you will readily explain yourself upon religious points, as you and I have had frequent conferences upon subjects of scripture.

Unitarian. Why really neighbour, I acknowledge the justness of your charge. As my sentiments are very different from those I formerly embraced and was educated in; so I think it my duty to act consistently with

with my principles, and to profess and practice, in religious matters, according to the dictates of my conscience. There was a little book published some Years ago, under the title of, *An Appeal to the Common Sense of all Christian People, &c.* which I carefully read, considered, and compared with Scripture, and more particularly with regard to the article of religious worship, which is of a practical nature; and profess myself deeply convinced, by the express determination of Christ and his Apostles, that the church worship offered up to the Holy Spirit, as God, and to the Trinity, as being three Persons and one God, is false and unscriptural; from whence, I think, it necessarily follows, that the famous Athanasian Doctrine of three co-equal Persons in one God, has no foundation in the word of God.

Athan. Oh, my friend ! you astonish me by such a bold declaration ; and I beg of you, for the sake of your

soul, to take heed, and beware how you run into a dangerous heresy, before you have weighed this important business with a cool and unprejudiced mind. What! is it possible to imagine that so many wise and good men should have been so grievously mistaken, as to be guilty of false worship in their solemn addresses to almighty God? Don't you know, that our liturgy was compiled by pious and learned men, and that it has been celebrated by several excellent writers, as the most perfect and christian form of public devotion in the whole christian world? You should, therefore, suspect, that this author has imposed on your judgment by some delusive arts, when his arguments have a tendency to draw you off from an important part of religious worship, settled and determined by the venerable fathers of the church of England, established by decrees of parliament and convocation, and strongly enforce by a pious and learned clergy.

Unitar.

Unitar. I am obliged to you, my good friend, for your advice, as I am well assured it proceeds from a kind regard for my spiritual welfare. But I can sincerely declare that my conviction has not been hasty: in the course of my enquiry I made all possible objections to the doctrine delivered in the *Appeal*, for the very reasons you assign, as I thought it strange and unaccountable, that such an excellent church should have continued so long in an error that breaks in upon the true character of the one God and Father of all, and the holy worship expressly determined by Christ and his Apostles. And in order to convince you of my sincerity in this grand affair, I must acquaint you, that I sent for an answer to the *Appeal*, wrote by the learned Dr. M' Donnel; and afterwards carefully examined the defence of the *Appeal*, wrote by the author of it, in reply to the learned doctor. Upon the most sincere and impartial enquiry, not with-

without earnest applications to the God of Truth, for the direction of his Holy Spirit in my religious disquisitions. I profess myself an Unitarian Christian, or a strong believer in one Supreme God and Father of all, a principle of natural as well as revealed religion. I see with my own eyes, and perceive with my own understanding, that it is my duty to worship the One God and Father of all, in the name and through the mediation of Jesus Christ, for the assistance of the Holy Spirit; and think it lawful to offer up petitions, and ascribe glory, to Christ, as mediator or redeemer, to the glory of God the Father. But as, upon the most careful examination of holy scripture, I cannot find the Holy Spirit directly invoked in prayer, praise, or glory, or any command to this purpose; surely this must be judged, by every unprejudiced christian, as an instance of will-worship, not warranted by the word of God; and, consequently, such unscriptural

unscriptural forms of devotion ought to be laid aside, though established by the authority of wise and learned men. With respect to the worship of the Trinity in Unity, or three Persons and one God; not even the least colour of evidence can be produced for it: every form of worship set forth by Christ and his Apostles is absolutely inconsistent with it. It is certainly worshipping God under a false character, or we know not what, when we offer up prayers to a Being, consisting of three co-equal Persons, contrary to the light of reason and scripture; and I am afraid this religious practice too nearly approaches to the crime of some degree of idolatry, as no such Being exists in the Universe.

Atban. Surely you must labour under some very great mistake, when you make such confident declarations regarding forms of worship that have been deduced from scripture by so many learned men; and have been
defended

defended in so many excellent books, wrote by persons of almost every denomination of christians, as well as of the church of England. Have you, my friend, carefully examined every part of scripture relating to religious worship ? Has not the author of the *Appeal* concealed some considerable evidence, in order to gain his cause, Though my memory, at present, does not furnish me with any particular passages, where the third and fourth petitions of the litany are found in express terms ; yet I am persuaded that these forms of worship are warranted by scripture, as our church, which professes the highest regard for scripture, as being founded upon it, has so long recommended and enforced the whole litany worship : and, you must allow, that the church of England has been blessed with many excellent members, remarkable for their piety as well as learning : and, consequently, I cannot think of departing from their religious sentiments,

ments, without the clearest and strongest evidence, drawn from the word of God.

Unitar. We of this nation ought to bleſs God for the inestimable advantages of the free use of the holy scriptures in the vulgar tongue. In the name of God, let every declaration of Christ and his Apostles, relating to religious worship, be examined and considered with the greatest care ; and let this important cause be determined by divine, and not human authority. I can ſincereſly tell you a plain matter of fact, that after having very accurately compared the New Testament with the collection of texts relating to religious worship in the *Appeal*, I could not find one paſſage omitted ; ſo that the author of it cannot be charged with concealing any part of the evidence, in order to gain his cause, according to the too common practice of party-writers.

My good friend, do but admit, as your protestant profession, and your ſeeming

seeming regard for scripture necessarily requires, that the authority of Christ and his Apostles is of greater weight than the decrees of even wise and learned men, and you will soon be convinced that the Athanasian worship is false and unscriptural. I will endeavour to point out to you a plain method of gaining entire satisfaction upon this important subject. Luke, ch. xi. v. 1. *And it came to pass that as he (viz. Christ) was praying in a certain place, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.* Now, the grand question is, what answer our Lord made to this reasonable enquiry?—Sure it is the duty of every christian to pay a very solemn regard to the determination of Christ himself. V. 2. *And he (viz. Christ) said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, &c.* This is exactly agreeable to the precept he gave in his sermon on the mount, Matth. ch. vi. v. 9. *After this manner*

ner pray ye : *Our Father which art in heaven, &c.* It appears then that our Saviour has plainly commanded all his disciples to worship the one God and Father of all, without any mention of the Mediator, as he had not yet compleated the glorious work of our redemption.

Athan. Your producing the Lord's Prayer is, I think, unnecessary, as all christians are uniformly agreed in it; and this prayer frequently occurs in every part of our public service.

Unitar. But it is proper to begin with a point universally agreed upon, in order to proceed, in a regular manner, to the examination of those points wherein we differ. Though the Lord's Prayer is so familiar to you, by frequent use, yet it is very possible that you, and thousands, might not have attended to the consequences naturally arising from this divine and comprehensive prayer.

In the next place, I recommend to your serious consideration, part

B of

of a discourse our Lord deliver'd to his disciples just before he was going to suffer a painful and scandalous death, John, ch. xv. ver. 23, 24,-- 26. *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing: Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. At that day ye shall ask in my name.* Be pleased to take particular notice, that our Lord hath in these declarations plainly set forth the true Christian Form of Worship; that whereas before this time the people of God worshipped the one God and Father of all, they should hereafter worship the same God and Father of all in the name of Jesus Christ. This is the solemn and peculiar addition of the Religion of Christ; and remarkable it is, the whole Christian world, amidst all their superstitious inventions and corruptions, are uniformly agreed in the practice of this form of worship.

ship. But here I must earnestly desire you to consider what foundation there is for the Athanasian worship of the Holy Spirit as God, and three Persons in one God. 'Tis impossible for the art of man to find it out in these plain declarations of our Saviour, when he was professedly delivering the duty of his disciples, with regard to the true object of religious worship.

Athan. I freely grant you that the church worship does not appear in this discourse of our Saviour. But does he not promise his disciples to send the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth? From whence it is not improbable to conclude, that some particulars were to be revealed to them after the descent of the Holy Ghost, which our Lord did not think proper to communicate to them in person; so that if the church worship be rightly deduced from the declarations of the inspired Apostles, it will yet stand upon a scripture foundation.

dation. You must allow something of this nature, as part of the worship you profess lawful is not warranted by this last discourse of our Saviour ; we find no encouragement in it to offer up any direct worship to himself ; and yet you deduce the lawfulness of it from the practice of the Apostles.

Unitar. On the other hand, I freely grant you, that our Saviour in this discourse has not commanded his disciples to offer up any direct worship to himself : and some worthy christians have concluded from this discourse, that Christ in his absence should not be worshipped at all : and doubtless this conclusion would have been rightly drawn, if the Apostles had never directly invoked Christ in prayer. But as those holy and inspired persons did, on some occasions, offer up petitions to Christ in his glorified state, and glory is expressly ascribed to him, and several passages imply this part of religious worship ; we are, I think,

think, warranted to invoke Christ as Mediator or Redeemer, to the glory of God the Father. Tho' Christ be represented as present, when worshipped under the character of a *Lamb slain* in Rev. ch. v. yet I cannot help judging, that this was designed as a pattern for the church to follow in its religious service, as the four beasts and four and twenty elders most probably denote the church of Christ.

But to return to our Saviour's last discourse to his disciples. If the true character of God be a Being consisting of three co-equal Persons, and it is our duty to worship him under this character, is it possible to imagine that our Lord should take no notice of such an essential part of our religious service? As no such worship can be deduced from this or any other discourse of our Saviour, it must certainly be given up as false and unscriptural, unless the Apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, have made it our express Duty, by clear Precepts

or example. But the matter of fact is demonstrated, even to eye-sight, that the Apostles offered up their usual and stated devotions to God through Jesus Christ. *Acts iv. 24-30.* *They lift up their voice to God, saying, Lord, thou art God—grant that—Wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.* —*1 Cor. xv. 57.* *Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.* The precepts relating to worship in the Epistles are to this effect. *Coloff. iii. 17.* *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* You may see all the forms of worship faithfully collected in the *Appeal*; from whence, demonstrative evidence arises, that the direct worship of the Holy Spirit is not warranted by the practice or precepts of the Apostles: and as for the gross worship of three Persons and one God, they have not left us the most distant intimation of any such religious practice; which you will readily perceive when

when you have carefully examined all their declarations, relating to the duty of worship.. If it had been the will of God that the disciples of Christ should have addressed themselves in a way of prayer or praise, directly to the Holy Spirit ; or that they should have worshipped one God under the character of three Persons, it would have been as plainly set forth in the New Testament, as it is in the liturgy of the church of England: and consequently the Athanasian forms of worship must appear, to all sincere-Bereans, false and unscriptural, as being destitute of all support from the directions of Christ and his Apostles.

Athan. But surely the high offices which the Holy Spirit sustains, and his being sometimes mentioned with the Father and the Son, as concerned in the great work of our salvation, afford good grounds for the direct invocation of him in prayer or praise; particularly, as we are commanded to be baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit,

Spirit, as well as of the Father and Son, Matth. xxviii. 19. And the apostolical benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. seems to imply distinct worship to the Holy Ghost.

Unitar. That the Son and Holy Spirit are employed by God in very high offices for the salvation, every christian must readily grant with joy and gratitude. As God Almighty sent Christ for the redemption of the world; so Christ, after he had compleated the gracious work by God assigned him, received a commission from him to send down the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, to enable them to propagate the gospel thro' the world: the comfortable assistance of the Holy Ghost is likewise promised to all sincere christians in the discharge of their most difficult duties. Upon this account the disciples of Christ are commanded to be baptized into the name of the Son and Holy Spirit, as well as of the Father. Being baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, or into his guidance and direction

direction, which is his particular office, cannot be of the same import with addressing ourselves to him in prayer or praise. When this famous Text in St. Matthew is cited, the words immediately foregoing should always be added, as being necessary to compleat the sense. Matth. xxviii. 18, 19. *All Power, that is, all Power relating to the gospel dispensation, is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;* and consequently the Father is mentioned as the giver of that power, the Son as the person to whom that power is given, and the Holy Ghost as the person whom our Lord chiefly employs in the exercise of that Power. From hence it necessarily follows, that the Son is inferior to the Father, and the Holy Ghost is inferior to both. If you read the *Appeal* and its *Defence*, you may see every thing relating to this text fully considered. The other Text you mention, is no

more

more than a solemn wish of St. Paul, that the favour of Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, or the joint partaking of the Holy Ghost, might be and continue with the Corinthians. But I refer you to every thing relating to this text fairly discussed in the *Appeal and Defence* (printed for Millar). As to any doxology, or the ascribing of glory to the person of the Holy Spirit, it is not even pretended, by learned men, that one instance of it can be produced from scripture. The New Testament lies open before you, and you may see with your own eyes, whether the common church doxology be there or not, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. The scripture doxologies are to this effect: Glory be to God through Jesus Christ.—Blessing, &c. be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, (viz. the one supreme God) and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Rom. xvi. 27.—Rev. v. 13. Again, with respect to the worship of Father, Son,

Son, and Holy Ghost, as being one God, it is a notorious matter of fact, not to be overthrown by all the subtle inventions of learned men through the whole christian world, that this form of worship is so far from being commanded or authorized by the sacred writers, that the worship there required is absolutely inconsistent with it ; the one supreme God, who is generally described by the character of Father, being constantly set forth as the only object to whom, or to whose ultimate Glory, all religious invocation should be directed. Nothing is more easy than for you, or for any other common christian, to determine this plain question, whether the worship of three Persons and one God be in the New Testament, which you have in your hands, or whether it be not ?

Athan. To speak impartially, your observations upon this article of religious worship, appear to me of considerable weight. If the matter of fact be as you have represented it, and you
very

very fairly refer me to the scripture it-self for my compleat satisfaction, I shall be obliged to give up the Athanasian worship, as what cannot be defended by the word of God. But as you allow, that direct worship is paid to Christ in scripture, and glory is expressly ascribed to him, is not this a very strong and conclusive argument, that Christ is equally divine with, or one God with the Father, as has been determined by many excellent writers?

Unitar. My good friend, as you begin to see some light and evidence which you had not observed before, I shall take a particular pleasure in employing my best endeavours to give you compleat satisfaction upon this important article of religious worship. The argument usually urged by learned men, drawn from the worship of Christ, to prove his supreme Divinity, is clearly and solidly answered by the plain scripture account of the honour and worship which is to be paid to Christ. By scripture then we learn, that we must honour

honour the Son, because the Father hath committed all judgment unto him. John v. 22, 23. that we must confess Christ to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philip. ii. 10, 11. And more particularly in Rev. ch. v. our Saviour is described under the character of a Lamb, and the reason is particularly set forth upon which the worship of Christ is founded. Be pleased to observe, that the ground of the worship here paid to the Lamb, is not his being equal to, or one God with the Father; not because he was employed by God as an inferior instrument in the creation of the world; the Lamb, I say, is not worshipped upon any of these accounts, but, expressly, because he was slain, and redeemed us to God by his blood. Rev. v. 8, 9, 10.-12, 13. Here it is solemnly declared, in perfect agreement with the whole tenor of the New Testament, that the worship paid to Christ is inferior, or mediatorial; for surely a worship expressly founded upon the

Lamb's having *redeemed us to God by blood*, and *being slain*, cannot possibly be of so high a nature as the worship offered up to the supreme Lord of all rational beings, by whose authority the Son himself was sent to take our nature upon him: in obedience to whose commands he underwent the miseries of this mortal life: was at last put to a painful and ignominious death: and by whose favour he was exalted to so great dignity and honour, as to receive homage from the saints in heaven and in earth, upon account of his extraordinary merits. The worship therefore paid to Christ, is, properly speaking, part of the worship of the one supreme God and Father of all, entirely derived from his commands, and redounding to his ultimate glory. As there is one God and Father of all, to whom we are commanded to pay absolute supreme honour and worship; so there is one mediator, Jesus Christ, to whom inferior or mediatorial worship is appointed,

pointed, who is represented, at the very time of his receiving the greatest honour recorded of him by the sacred writers, under the character of a *Lamb that was slain*: a character absolutely inconsistent with the notion of his supreme Godhead: a character absolutely inconsistent with his title to supreme Honour and Worship.

Athan. My good friend, it does not become a sincere christian, to withstand the evidence you have, I think, fairly produced from the word of God: The objection I made is solidly answered: more especially Rev. ch. v. seems to determine the inferior, or mediatorial worship of Christ with the greatest plainness and exactness; and I really wonder at myself, and many others, who have not seen so bright a light.

Unitar. My dear christian friend, we ought to make great allowances for each others infirmities, mistakes, and prejudices, naturally arising from various causes. Nothing is more common in human life, than even for thinking

persons to receive information about things seemily plain and obvious, who are apt to express their surprize, that such obvious things escaped their notice. But the readiness you shew to submit to evidence, when fairly laid before you, upon religious subjects, proceeds from an excellent temper of Mind, which naturally qualifies you to receive the truth, as it is in Jesus. As you freely grant that the Athanasian forms of worship must be given up, if the fact be as I have stated it; I am willing to put the whole cause upon this short and important issue. If, upon enquiry, you can point out one plain instance or precept in scripture, that it is the duty of christians to worship the Holy Spirit as God, and three Persons and one God, in prayer, praise, or glory; I shall then freely acknowledge myself in a religious error, and shall think myself obliged to return to the church worship, which I have carefully omitted since the time of my conviction. On the other hand, if you cannot

cannot point out any such worship in scripture, by your own concession, you will judge yourself obliged to adhere to scripture forms of worship, notwithstanding the authority of even wise and learned men; it being an express duty required of Christ's disciples to *obey God rather than man*. Let it be observed, that this argument drawn from the article of worship, and which is adapted to all capacities, absolutely demolishes the Athanasian doctrine; it being impossible to conceive that the Holy Spirit, who is supposed by the Athanasians to be of equal dignity with God the Father, should never have one Prayer directed to him, should have no glory ascribed to him, in the Writings of the Apostles, from whom alone we can receive a faithful account of the christian dispensation. Again, how is it possible to imagine that it was the design of the sacred writers to fix the belief of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as being three Persons and one God, in the minds of christians, as they have left us no example of any

sort

sort of worship directed to three Persons and one God ? If this had been a fundamental doctrine of the gospel, we should not only have had it plainly and frequently expressed, but likewise solemn prayers and praises would have been addressed to God, under the character of three co-equal persons ; otherwise, the Apostles themselves have left us in the dark with regard to an essential part of christian worship. Can it enter the heart of any serious christian to believe in earnest, that it is necessary to salvation to conceive of God as a Being consisting of three Persons, (as is profanely and absurdly maintained in the Athanasian creed, a creed which ought to be banished from the public service of all christian societies) when the Apostles themselves have never made it the duty of christians to offer up prayers or praises to God under this Athanasian character ; but in all the examples of worship recorded in scripture, Almighty God is always addressed

addressed to as one Supreme Intelligent Agent, one God and Father of all? This essential failure in the Athanasian cause has, I find, driven some of its learned defenders into this palpable absurdity, That when we pray to God under the character of Father, Father denotes Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: which demonstrates the falsehood of the cause they are labouring to support; it being extremely clear from hence, that they cannot produce one instance of worship offered up to three Persons and one God. Otherwise, men of sense and learning would not have recourse to such an expedient, as hath no other tendency but to turn the scripture into ridicule, and expose it to the scoffs of profane and sceptical men.

Athan. I freely allow the grand importance of this plain matter of fact, drawn from the article of religious worship. But I would just take notice of a Text that seems to imply the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, tho'

tho' no instance of worship paid to such a Being appears in scripture.

1. John v. 7. There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One.

Unitar. Ever since I became acquainted with this subject, it has been matter of serious lamentation to me, that common christians have been so much imposed upon by the sound of this famous text, which, if wrote by St. John, is nothing to the purpose, the sense of it being evidently this. That these three are one as agreeing in the same testimony. But it is a matter of fact well known to the learned, that it is a spurious interpolated Text, and has been given up, as such, by some Athanasian writers; and, consequently, this Text ought not to be read in churches as the word of God. You may see every thing relating to it faithfully represented in the *Defence of the Appeal.*

Athan.

Athan. Without entering into the merits of this question, for which I am not qualified; if some learned professors of the Trinity in Unity have given up this Text as not wrote by St. John, it must be allowed that no stress should be laid upon so controverted a Text.—But, after all the concessions I have made, regarding the article of worship, are there not, in scripture, several high titles and attributes ascribed to the Son and Holy Spirit, which surely have a tendency to induce christians to think them equally divine with the Father?

Unitar. I am persuaded, that if a person who had never heard of the Athanasian doctrine and worship, was to read the New Testament *, he would be surprised to find that such a doctrine and worship ever prevailed in the christian world. But to give a direct answer to your objection, drawn from the high

* When Job, the African, was in England, and was asked, after reading the New Testament, if he found Three Gods there: he replied, 'No, no! One great God—One great good God.'

titles

titles and attributes ascribed to the Son and Holy Spirit. It is no wonder that great things are spoken in scripture of Christ and the Holy Spirit, who are employed by God in very high offices for the grand work of man's salvation. But, the sacred writers have taken all imaginable care to secure the supremacy of the One God and Father of all, when they speak in the highest strain of the One Mediator Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter. With respect to the title of God, in some few passages ascribed to our blessed Saviour, it is extremely plain, from the Old and New Testament, that this title is sometimes used in the inferior sense; Moses, magistrates, and angels, being styled Gods consistently with the acknowledgment of One Supreme God; and Christ himself, in his answer to the Jews, when they charged him with blasphemy, expressly contends for the use of the word God in the inferior sense. John x. 34, 35, 36. See likewise *Appeal* and *Defence*;

where

where every particular relating to the high titles and attributes ascribed to Christ and the Holy Spirit, is fully discussed. It is sufficient for my present purpose, to observe in general, that, when this, and other high titles and attributes ascribed to Christ (for the Holy Spirit is never expressly styled God or Lord) are collected together, and presented to the reader with all possible advantage, which is frequently done by Athanasian writers, our Lord himself, and his Apostles, have assured us, in the most solemn manner, That he (viz. Christ) *received* his being, high titles, and attributes from God the Father; that God advanced him to exalted dignity and honour, upon account of his amazing humiliation and sufferings; and that the whole redounds to the Glory of God the Father. This plain and solemn account effectually overthrows the argument usually drawn from the most pompous recital of our Saviour's high titles and attributes: it being absolutely impossible

that

that the supreme God should have any thing *given* him by any being whatsoever. For, according to the unanswerable declaration of St Paul, *Who hath first given to him, (viz. God) and it shall be recompensed to him? For of him, and thro' him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever,* Rom. ii. 35, 36. From whence it follows, with demonstrative evidence, that Christ, who was *given* by God, who *received his all from God*, is a Person, in his most exalted state, inferior to the one Supreme Father of all. And the argument holds still stronger with regard to the Holy Spirit, who was sent by Christ from heaven to inspire the Apostles with extraordinary gifts, to render them qualified for their important work, by a commission he received from his God and Father. Add to this, that there are, in the New Testament, about 240 passages, wherein Christ is declared to be inferior to Almighty God. The expressions relating to this point are plain

plain and clear, incapable of any other sense without violence and distortion: on the other hand, there is but the sound of one Text, which seems to set forth Christ's equality with the Father, and the sound is entirely owing to a false translation, viz. Philipp. ii. 6. *Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God;* the words should be rendered thus; *who, tho' he was like the most high God, yet was not eager to retain that likeness to God.* Be pleased to read the 11th verse, and then determine, by the principles of common sense, whether a person equal to the supreme God, can be raised to higher dignity than he had before? Again, what demonstrates the falsehood of the Athanasian doctrine beyond a possibility of doubt is, that there are about 40 passages, wherein the three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned together, who are sometimes stiled, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; or the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; the living God, Christ, the Spirit; God, the Son of God, the Holy Ghost; God, the Lord, the Spirit. But,

D

not

not one passage appears, where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are said to be the one God, as determined in the Athanasian creed: on the other hand, the Father is called God, the living God, and, sometimes, the One God, expressly distinguished from the Son and Holy Spirit. You must, in this place either give up the plain declarations of scripture, or the Athanasian creed, they being, when fairly compared together, absolutely inconsistent with each other.

I'll conclude with a plain scripture fact, relating to the character of the one supreme God. There are, in the New Testament, 441 passages, wherein God the Father is styled either the One or Only God, or God absolutely, by way of eminence and supremacy; or God with some peculiar high titles, epithets or attributes. Upon the whole, the sacred writers have taken all imaginable care to maintain the supremacy of the one God and Father of all, *who is above all, and through all, and in us all*; it proceeding entirely from his boundless love and mercy, that his Son was given for our redemption, and his Spirit for our Sanctification.

Athan. I heartily thank you, my good friend, for the pains you have taken to set me right on this important point. I cannot help acknowledging that you proceed in a rational way, and that your arguments seem justly drawn from scripture, interpreted by

reason. If there be such a number of texts in the New Testament clearly setting forth the sense you have contended for under the three last heads of your discourse, the Athanasian cause is certainly demolished. Surely it must have cost you a vast deal of time and labour to collect such a number of texts, and range them in a proper order. I am determined to give the New Testament a serious review, and to take particular notice of all those passages that refer to God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. And if, upon an impartial examination, I find your facts truly represented, and your reasoning conclusive, I shall think it my duty to profess my conviction, tho' it should contradict the practice and sentiments of wise and learned men whose authority, I own, has hitherto had too much influence on my mind.

Unitar. My dear christian friend, your resolution is wise and good. Nothing is of greater consequence, in the grand business of religion, than that every person, to whom God has given common sense and reason, should judge and determine for himself, in all points wherein his duty is concerned. I have the particular satisfaction to reflect, that the more carefully you examine the subject of our debate, the stronger conviction you will receive of the truth of the scripture facts I have faithfully set forth. And, as

to the reasoning part, it is certainly founded on the principles of common sense, which is the best method of interpreting scripture.

With respect to the authority of wise and learned men, and the argument drawn from the established liturgy, I find upon enquiry, that many wise, learned, and good men, and some whose judgment upon any question is of more value than that of thousands, have embraced the Unitarian doctrine; and what deserves particular notice, some of them, who had been educated in the usual Athanasian scheme, afterwards professed the right opinion of God and his holy worship, in opposition to their worldly interest; and even, since the Reformation, suffered imprisonment, banishment, and death.— No doubt of it, the memory of our first reformers ought to be held in very high esteem, upon account of what they did and suffered in the glorious work of cleansing religion from the foul corruptions of popery: but certain it is that they did not sufficiently examine the gross opinion of three Persons in one God; they too readily took for granted what had been settled and determined by the fathers and councils of the 4th and 5th centuries after the time of Christ; when, persons acquainted with church history assure us, the unity of God, in the plain and litteral sense, was first corrupted; and, that a superstitious veneration of reliques, and

invocation of saints immediately followed the corruption.—To speak my mind freely, it is certainly matter of serious lamentation that such a gross corruption in the pure religion of holy Jesus, and which laid the foundation of the grand apostacy, has not been long ago banished from the church of England, which, in the most solemn manner, professeth the scripture as the only rule of faith and practice; and, that nothing should be imposed on the consciences of men but what is warranted by the word of God. It is well known, that this very subject was recommended to the consideration of the most eminent persons in church and state, above fifty years ago, by two very extraordinary divines, viz. Mr. Whiston, in his *Primitive Christianity Revived*, and Dr. Clarke in his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*. The latter being referred to in the *Appeal*, as an excellent book, I procured it, and there was surprizingly furnished with all the texts relating to the doctrine of the Trinity, reduced under proper heads: and how any christian can withstand the evidence arising from such a number of texts, (viz. 1251) is to me astonishing, Again, there was a particular application made to the governing powers, in an humble, calm, and christian manner, sixteen years ago, in order to get the liturgy reformed according to the standard of scripture: but no-

thing has yet been attempted in that glorious cause ; the same corrupt forms are still kept up in the midst of light and knowledge ; and therefore, common christians are, with the highest reason called upon to examine, judge, determine, profess, and protest, to disregard all public authority, when it stands in competition with the express declarations of Christ and his Apostles.

We are perpetually praying to our heavenly Father that *his name might be hallowed*, that is, that he might be worshipped and adored as the supreme and only object of the highest reverence and love of all rational creatures, and yet, at the same time we obstinately continue in such false worship as eclipses his supreme honour and glory, in express contradiction to his holy word. We are constantly interceding with Almighty God for the good estate of the catholic church, that it may be so guided and governed by his good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves christians, may be led into the way of truth, and, at the same time, we seem determined to hold fast important errors regarding God and his holy worship, notwithstanding the strongest and clearest light. Upon some occasions, more especially in one of the collects for Good Friday, we earnestly pray for the conversion of Jews, Turks, and Infidels, and at the end of the very same collect we

inconsistently keep up a religious practice, that is one of the greatest obstacles to their conversion, it being, by all accounts, extremely evident, that neither Jews nor Mahometans, who are believers of one supreme God, can be converted, whilst they are taught to think, that the doctrine of three Persons in one God, and the worship practiced in consequence of it, are essential parts of the christian religion. This can be deemed little else than a solemn mockery of the Almighty, unless we employ our sincere endeavours to effect what we pray for, and, I am afraid, will produce mischievous consequences to this church and nation, if no alterations can be obtained from the governing powers.

Since my conviction, I have been naturally led to reflect on the lamentable state of mankind in almost all ages and countries with respect to the knowledge of the one true God. Not a great many years after the flood, whereby the immediate finger of the almighty creator was so remarkably displayed, there was a general revolt of the nations of the earth into a state of gross idolatry: upon which account, God Almighty chose a particular people, for the glorious purpose of keeping up the knowledge and worship of the one true God, as this grand principle of all religion, though established by demonstrative evidence in the works of creation, would have been cer-

tainly lost without an extraordinary revelation *. And even as to this chosen peo-

* The learned Bp. Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses*, justly observes (Vol. 2, Part 2. p. 360. 1st Edit.) that, 'The separation of the Israelites was in order to preserve the doctrine of the Unity amidst the idolatrous world.' Upō this subject he makes a very judicious remark, (Vol. 2. B. 48. 1st Edit.) viz. 'That not one of the many pretended Revelations on which Paganism was founded, ever professed to come from the first cause, or taught the worship of the one God in their public ministrations, whatever sentiments some particular persons might entertain in private.' And, 'That this uncommon peculiarity attending the Jewish religion, is a mark of its divine authority.' — It may be naturally concluded, that Bp. Warburton, in this learned Treatise, took the Unity of God in the plain and literal sense, because he speaks with great contempt of the Hutchinsonians, (Vol. 2. Part 2 p 359. 1st Edit.) who contend for the doctrine of Trinity in Unity from the terms in the Old Testament, wherein God is described — Add to this, that Bp. Warburton, in the Dedication (P. 4, 5, 6. 1st Edit.) of the first volume of the *Divine Legation*, speaks in very high terms of a well known pamphlet, under the title of, *Difficulties and Discouragements which attend the Study of the Scriptures, by Way of private Judgment*, wrote by the late learned Bp. Hare; which was addressed to some hot bigots, then in power, who wanted to prosecute Mr. Whiston and Dr. Clarke with the rigour of the law, for professing and maintaining the fundamental doctrine of all true religion, the one Supreme God and Father of all. Bp. Warburton very justly calls this an *inquisitional Spirit*, and expresses himself very strongly in favour of religious liberty. I cannot therefore believe, without the strongest evidence, that the same Bp. Warburton has uttered threatening speeches against a common christian in his diocese, for attempt-

ple, the history of the Old Testament faithfully informs us, that before the Babylonish captivity, they frequently fell into idolatry, and very seldom continued any considerable time in a steady obedience to the Lord their God.—And happy had it been for the Christian world, if they had never departed from the plain and fundamental article of all true religion, viz. the Unity of God, so frequently inculcated in scripture. Moses, the Jewish law-giver, delivers this in the most solemn manner. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God.* Deut. vi. 4. And our Saviour, when he was asked by one of the scribes, *which is the first commandment of all?* confirms the same doctrine by his express authority. *And Jesus answering to restore the supreme worship of God the Father Almighty;* in other terms, for attempting to reduce to practice the very principles which exposed those eminent divines to the odium of persecuting bigots, whose violent spirit, upon that occasion, his lordship so justly condemns. If it was the true spirit of Popery to aim at the prosecution of those two eminent Unitarian professors at that time, it must surely be the same spirit, only attended with higher aggravations, religious liberty having been so copiously discussed and well understood since, to take any steps tending to suppress, by violent methods, the religious sentiments of a plain honest Unitarian of this time. God forbid that a christian bishop should act such an inconsistent part, as to practice that very bigotry himself, which he so severely condemned in others; when the object of both was exactly the same. I hope and believe that his lordship has been unjustly charged on this occasion.

him, the first of all the commandments is, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God.* Mark xii. 28, 29. And that this one God is the Father only, expressly distinguished from the Son and Holy Spirit, is as plainly and strongly declared by Christ and his Apostles, as it is possible for words to set it forth. And yet, in opposition to the authority of both, who derived their commission from God, it was determined by fallible and presumptuous mortals, between 4 and 500 years after Christ, that there are three supreme Gods, and, at the same time, that these three supreme Gods are one God; and whoever will not believe this gross nonsense, and impious contradiction is doomed to eternal torments. In consequence of this absurd doctrine, it was decreed, that it is the duty of christians to worship God under the character of three co-equal Persons, without even the least colour of evidence taken from scripture. If this be not such a departure from God and his holy worship, as calls aloud for reformation, I must despair of understanding the plainest case in matters of religion. But whether the governing powers will regard their duty in this grand affair, or whether they will not, every particular person, who has gained right notions of God and his holy worship, is indispensably obliged to profess and practice in exact conformity to

the solemn determination of Christ and his Apostles, without regarding any worldly inconveniences that may arise from the rejection of false notions and unscriptural worship. This is an essential character of Christ's disciples, and required as an express condition by our Lord himself. Luke ix. 26. *Whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own Glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

But let it be always remembered, and deeply fixed in our Hearts, that right notions of God and his holy worship were not intended to amuse our minds with empty speculations, but to establish a rational * correspondence between God & our souls, that we may be effectually influenced to reduce to practice the pure and holy Laws of Jesus Christ. If we have gained better and more rational sentiments of religion than we had before, we are called upon by still stronger obligations to let our light so shine before men that they may glorify your father which is in heaven. Do we see by a lively faith the one supreme God in his real character, as a Being of all possible perfection, more especially justice, mercy, love, goodness, and every valuable excellence that can attract a reasonable affection? We are then certainly required to love this glorious and amiable Being, with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our Strength, by preferring his favour before every interest of this mortal state, as being really better than life itself; by getting above every

* I have lately seen a little tract, entitled, *Helps to Devotion on several Occasions*, printed at Birmingham, and sold by T. Warren, jun. near the New Chappel; 1763. (Price 4d) which I would recommend to Unitarian Christians.

corrupt appetite and passion, and taking all possible pains to adorn our lives and actions with the excellent qualifications of piety, righteousness, charity, sobriety, patience, purity, and holiness, which Christ and his Apostles have solemnly inculcated, as the necessary terms and conditions of gaining eternal life. On the other hand, very severe threatenings, namely, exclusion from the kingdom of heaven, and a state of great and lasting misery, are denounced against all wilful sinners, who continue such without sincere amendment and reformation, demonstrated by a uniform course of universal righteousness to the end of their lives.

Athan. My good friend, tho' you are very zealous in this important cause, yet your zeal is conducted by reason and knowledge. Party zealots, in the midst of their solicitous concern to settle opinions and religious practices, are to apt to forget or disregard the christian obligations to universal charity and holiness of life. I am really convinced, that what you have said highly deserves the serious consideration of all those who profess themselves disciples of Jesus Christ, and in earnest believe the divine authority of the holy scripture. I hope to make a proper use of this religious conference, and to act such a part in consequence of it, as will be accepted at that solemn time, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

Unitar. I sincerely rejoice, my dear christian friend, that you are become a Berean, and resolved to search the scripture with an unprejudiced mind; which excellent temper will, I make no doubt, lead you to a rational satisfaction upon this and other religious subjects. And may the blessing of the One Supreme God and Father of All attend your sincere disquisitions.